

Message Text

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0043
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 06841

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RP, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON THE PHILIPPINES AND ASEAN

REF: MOSCOW 6385

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL STATES THAT SOVIET DFM
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FIRYUBIN COULD VISIT THE PHILIPPINES LATER THIS YEAR
(PHILIPPINES EMBASSY SAYS MAY); DENIES THAT SOVIETS ARE
SUPPLYING ARMS OR INSPIRATION TO THE MOROS; CHARGES THAT
CHINESE SEE THE PHILIPPINES AS A "WEAK LINK" IN ASEAN
THROUGH WHICH TO PURSUE PEKING'S ANTI-SOVIET FOREIGN
POLICY; REITERATES SOVIET REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ASEAN; TERMS
SPRATLEYS AS POTENTIALLY "EXPLOSIVE" PROBLEM. WE SEE

LONG RUN SOVIET OBJECTIVES TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES AS WEAKENING PHILIPPINE TIES WITH U.S. AND JAPAN WHILE COUNTERING CHINESE MOVES. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS: NIKOLAI F. BULIGIN, COUNSELOR (PHILIPPINES), SOVIET MFA SECOND FAR EAST DEPARTMENT, DISCUSSED SOVIET-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS ON MARCH 28 WITH EMBOFF AND VISITING SOV/MULTI OFFICER BROWN. BULIGIN DESCRIBED THESE RELATIONS AS BEING IN THE "FIRST PHASE" SINCE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE ONLY ESTABLISHED IN 1976 AND THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ARRIVED IN MANILA TWO MONTHS AGO. HE STATED THAT SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FIRYUBIN COULD VISIT THE PHILIPPINES LATER THIS YEAR. (NOTE: A PHILIPPINE DIPLOMAT SAYS THE VISIT WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN MAY. END NOTE.) BULIGIN STATED THAT THE FIRYUBIN VISIT WILL MARK THE FIRST TIME A HIGH LEVEL SOVIET DELEGATION HAS OFFICIALLY VISITED THE PHILIPPINES. HE NOTED THAT TOTAL SOVIET-PHILIPPINE TRADE AMOUNTS TO ONLY \$100 MILLION A YEAR AND ANTICIPATED THAT TRADE AND OTHER CONTACTS WILL INCREASE AS RELATIONS EVOLVE INTO THE "SECOND PHASE."

2. BULIGIN EXPRESSED IGNORANCE ON THE REPORTED CAPTURE OF SOVIET ARMS FROM MORO REBELS. HE STATED MOSCOW DOES NOT SUPPORT THE "DISMEMBERMENT" OF THE PHILIPPINES. NOTING PHILIPPINE MUSLIMS MAKE UP ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, HE RECALLED THAT MUSLIM SEPARATISM IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN A PROBLEM FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THE SOVIET ARMS CAME FROM LIBYA, HE RESPONDED THAT MALAYSIA AS WELL AS LIBYA COULD BE THE SOURCE.

3. THE PHILIPPINE DCM TELLS US THAT THE SOVIETS HERE CLAIM IGNORANCE ON THE SOURCE OF THE SOVIET ARMS IN THE HANDS OF THE MOROS. THEY CONTEND THAT MOSCOW SUPPORTS A UNITED PHILIPPINES. PHILIPPINE SOURCE ALSO COMMENTED (ALTHOUGH BULIGIN DENIED) THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE SUGGESTED A "SHOWCASE PROJECT" INVOLVING DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIPPINE FISHING FACILITIES WHICH MANILA IS STILL STUDYING. PHILIPPINE SOURCE SAID THAT THE PHILIPPINES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE AGREED ON A CEILING OF THIRTY-FIVE (DIPLOMATIC AND NON-DIPLOMATIC) PERSONNEL IN EACH COUNTRY. FIVE FILIPINOS HAVE ARRIVED IN MOSCOW (THREE DIPLOMATIC) AND IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE FINAL NUMBER OF PHILIPPINE DIPLOMATS WILL EVEN APPROACH THE CEILING. SEVEN SOVIETS HAVE ARRIVED IN MANILA AND VISAS HAVE BEEN ISSUED FOR A TOTAL OF TWENTY. SOURCE SAID SOVIETS ARE SEARCHING FOR A COMPOUND IN MANILA THAT WILL HOLD ALL THIRTY-FIVE SOVIET PERSONNEL. THE

PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR HERE IS STILL HOUSED IN TEMPORARY
QUARTERS AND THE EMBASSY IS OPERATING OUT OF RENTED
HOTEL SPACE. HOWEVER, HE CLAIMED, THE SOVIETS ARE
GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ASSIST IN MINOR AREAS SUCH
AS PROVISION OF THEATER TICKETS.

4. SINO-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS: BULIGIN SAID THAT
CHINESE VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN CHOSE TO VISIT THE
PHILIPPINES BECAUSE IT IS A "WEAK LINK" IN THE
ASEAN CHAIN. THE CHINESE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, LESS WELCOME
IN OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES LIKE SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA,

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WHICH HAVEKFO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING. HE
CHARGED THAT THE CHINESE POLICY OF SUPPORTING ASEAN IS
BASED ON ANTI-SOVIETISM AND REPRESENTS A CHINESE CHANGE
IN "TACTICS." MAO DECLARED THAT THE CHINESE
WOULD CONQUER S.E.A. THE PRESENT CHINESE LEADERSHIP

HAS NOT RENOUNCED THIS POLICY, AND IS INDIRECTLY PURSUING THE SAME OBJECTIVE.

5. U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS: EXCEPT FOR BULIGIN'S INQUIRY ABOUT PROGRESS IN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS, THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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TOPIC WAS NOT DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING. HOWEVER, AT RECENT COCKTAIL PARTY, EMBOFF QUESTIONED BULIGIN'S SUPERIOR (AND CHIEF, MFA'S SECOND FAR EAST DEPARTMENT), N. N. SOLOV'YEV, ABOUT ANTI-U.S. CHARGES REPORTED REFTEL. SOLOV'YEV SHRUGGED AND STATED THAT HE HAD NOT READ THE ARTICLES VERY CLOSELY. (NOTE: APRIL 2 TASS ARTICLE ON PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS REPEATS CHARGES THAT U.S. IS APPLYING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON MANILA IN ORDER TO RETAIN ITS POSITION IN THE PHILIPPINES. ARTICLE HOLDS THAT WASHINGTON IS ATTEMPTING TO BOLSTER "THE LANDLORD OLIGARCHY AND THE COMPRADORE BOURGEOCDIE, LINKED WITH AMERICAN CAPITAL, WHOSE POSITION HAS BEEN STRONGLY UNDERMINED BY THE MARCOS ADMINISTRATION." ARTICLE STATES MARCOS' OPPOSITION IS CALLING FOR "U.S. INTERFERENCE IN PHILIPPINE AFFAIRS" AND CONCLUDES THAT THE U.S. "FORMER COLONIAL MASTERS ARE TRYING AS BEST THEY CAN TO PREVENT THE COUNTRY'S ADVANCE ALONG THE ROAD OF INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT." END NOTE.)

6. ASEAN: BULIGIN DID NOT INDICATE ANY SHIFT AWAY FROM THE SOVIET LINE INCORPORATING CRITICISM OF ASEAN AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BETTER BILATERAL TIES AMONG COUNTRIES IN ASEAN AND INDO-CHINA. HE CHARGED THAT ASEAN MAY STILL BE A SUCCESSOR TO SEATO. IN THIS REGARD, HE COMMENTED THAT ASEAN LEADERS OFTEN EXPRESS "ANTI-COMMUNIST ATTITUDES;" THAT ASEAN MEMBERS HAVE SEPARATE MILITARY COOPERATION AGREEMENTS AMONG THEMSELVES, EVEN IF THIS IS NOT IN AN ASEAN CONTEXT; AND THAT SOME ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE MILITARY AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. AND OTHER OUTSIDE POWERS WHICH SUPPLY THEM WITH ARMS. WHEN ASKED, HE DENIED THAT THE SOVIET AND VIETNAMESE POSITIONS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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ASEAN ARE IDENTICAL, STATING THAT THERE IS NO "AUTOMATIC LINK" BETWEEN THE TWO.

7. SPRATLEYS: BULIGIN SAID THAT THE USSR, LIKE THE U.S., WANTS TO AVOID THE PROBLEM OF THE SPRATLEYS. HE SAID THAT THE SPRATLEY PROBLEM COULD BECOME

"EXPLOSIVE," ESPECIALLY IF OIL IS FOUND.

8. COMMENT: MOSCOW IS WELL AWARE THAT ITS MINISCULE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC TIES TO THE PHILIPPINES ARE NOT LIKELY TO GROW SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS WILL PATIENTLY CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO INCREASE DIPLOMATIC, POLITICAL, TRADE AND CULTURAL CONTACTS WITH MANILA THAT FIRST BEGAN TO BEAR FRUIT IN 1968 WITH EXCHANGES OF TRADE DELEGATIONS. THE LONG RANGE SOVIET OBJECTIVE, WHICH COINCIDES WITH VIETNAMESE OBJECTIVES, IS TO WEAKEN PHILIPPINE TIES WITH THE U.S. AND JAPAN AND TO COUNTER ATTEMPTS BY PEKING TO INCREASE CHINESE INFLUENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES. WHILE CONTENT OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA ATTACKS ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES IS STANDARD FARE IN THE SOVIET PRESS, WE READ THESE THEMES AS A GOOD INDICATION THAT MOSCOW WILL BE USING ITS RESOURCES WHEN AND WHERE POSSIBLE TO STOKE ANTI-U.S. (AND ANTI-CHINESE) SENTIMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES. THE TASS ARTICLE (PARA 5) ALSO INDICATES THAT MOSCOW CURRENTLY LOOKS ON MARCOS AS AN OPPORTUNITY ON WHICH TO PURSUE THIS BROADER, LONG-RUN OBJECTIVE. BARRING A MAJOR CHANGE IN SOVIET-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, WE ANTICIPATE THAT MOSCOW WILL CONTINUE TO CALIBRATE ITS POLICIES TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES AND S.E.A. GENERALLY WITH THOSE OF HANOI. TOON

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